

Paul and Silas in prison

**Bible verses:**

Acts 16:16-40

Paul and Silas in jail

**Aim:**

To know we can be close to God in difficult times

**Today's fruit:**

Patience



In today's session we will learn about a difficult time for Paul and Silas that led to a miraculous event.

Paul and Silas did exactly what God asked them to do and told everyone they met about Jesus. But the people in today's story didn't want to hear what they had to say. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. But they trusted in God, and knew he was close to them even when things were difficult.

Paul and Silas knew that God is good and that God is always with us. This helped them be patient, even while they were in prison.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- Pens/pencils and paper
- Resources to retell the story of Paul and Silas – see Action it
- *Comic template* handout (optional)
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- *Instructions* handout and Blu-tak/tape
- To display the sequence of events on a flipchart/screen – see Action it
- Today's fruit sign: *Patience*

Start it

Before the session stick the *Instructions* handout sheets around the room. Explain to the children that our Bible characters for today, Paul and Silas, did exactly what God asked them to do. They followed his instructions.

Using paper and pens, the children can work independently or in pairs to follow all the instructions, in any order. Once completed they can share their answers together.

There is one instruction per sheet:

- Draw a cat.
- Write a girl's name beginning with B.
- Write the name of a song by your favourite singer.
- Draw a picture of something that reminds you of your favourite place.
- Write a boy's name that ends with M.
- Write your favourite line from a film or book.

Sing it

Say:

Our song for today is full of praise to God. It also mentions two of the characters from today's story.



Song

'**That's who I praise**' by Brandon Lake (motions and lyrics) by Kid Kardia (3:48)

Tell it

Say:

In our story today we meet two people who were completely committed to following God and telling the world about Jesus. They did this even when their lives were in danger. Let's find out what happened to Paul and Silas.

Video

God's Story: Paul and Silas by Crossroads Kids' Club (3:42)

Watch: 0:00-1:05 'Now remember, Paul and Silas were just trying to tell them about God, and now they found themselves behind bars in prison.'

Say:

Paul and Silas travelled to Philippi to tell the people all about Jesus. In the Bible we discover more about why the people were so angry with them.

Read:

'Once, while we were going to the place for prayer, a servant girl met us. She had a special spirit in her. She earned a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes. This girl followed Paul and us. She said loudly, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!"

'She kept this up for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" Immediately, the spirit came out.

'The owners of the servant girl saw this. These men knew that now they could not use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the city rulers in the marketplace. Here they brought Paul and Silas to the Roman rulers and said, "These men are Jews and are making trouble in our city. They are teaching things that are not right for us as Romans to do."'

(Acts 16:16-21 ICB)

Ask:

What was the servant girl doing to make money for her owners?

Say:

People would pay for the girl to tell them what was going to happen in the future. Once Paul prayed with the girl and demanded the spirit to leave, she couldn't make money for her owners any more.

Ask:

How do you think her owners felt about that?

Say:

The people had their own way of doing things, and Paul and Silas said they needed to change. They were angry. The people dragged Paul and Silas in front of the city rulers and said, 'They are teaching things that are not right for us as Romans to do.' *(Acts 16:21 ICB)*

Ask:

What happened to Paul and Silas?

Read:

'The crowd joined the attack against them. The Roman officers tore the clothes of Paul and Silas and had them beaten with rods again and again. Then Paul and Silas were thrown into jail. The jailer was ordered to guard them carefully.'

(Acts 16:16-40 ICB)

Say:

The whole crowd started attacking Paul and Silas. Even though they hadn't done anything wrong, Paul and Silas were thrown into jail.

Ask:

Do you think Paul and Silas deserved to end up in prison? Explain your answer.

Watch: 1:06-1:41 'Sometimes you can look a little weird when you're serving others or worshipping, God but that's OK.'

Ask:

What surprising thing did Paul and Silas do when they were in jail?

Say:

Paul and Silas sang songs of praise to God.

Ask:

If you were in Paul and Silas's position, what song of praise would you choose to sing? Maybe you would choose our song for today.

Watch: 1:42-3:08 'And that's the story of Paul and Silas.'

Say:

The other prisoners listened as Paul and Silas lifted their voices in praise to God.

Ask:

What happened next?

Read:

'Suddenly, there was a big earthquake. It was so strong that it shook the foundation of the jail. Then all the doors of the jail broke open. All the prisoners were freed from their chains. The jailer woke up and saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had already escaped. So he got his sword and was about to kill himself.'

(Acts 16:26-27 ICB)

Ask:

Imagine you are the jailer in the story. Your only job is to make sure that the prisoners do not escape. It's already been a strange evening, as instead of causing trouble, your prisoners are singing and praising God. Then an earthquake hits out of nowhere, and the jail doors are thrown open. What is going through your mind right now?

Ask:

- Why do you think the jailer was ready to take his own life?
- What would have happened to him if the prisoners escaped while he was supposed to be in charge?

Read:

‘But Paul shouted, “Don’t hurt yourself! We are all here!”

‘The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside. Shaking with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, “Men, what must I do to be saved?”

‘They said to him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all the people in your house.” So Paul and Silas told the message of the Lord to the jailer and all the people in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then he and all his people were baptised immediately. After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them food. He and his family were very happy because they now believed in God.

The next morning, the Roman officers sent the police to tell the jailer, “Let these men go free!””

(Acts 16:28-35 *ICB*)

Ask:

How did the jailer feel when he realised that none of the prisoners had escaped?

Say:

The jailer took Paul and Silas home with him. It must have been very strange for his wife and family. It can’t have been normal for a jailer to bring prisoners home for tea!

Ask:

What amazing thing happened to the jailer’s family when they met Paul and Silas?

Say:

The jailer’s family believed in God, and their lives were changed for ever.

Action it

This story is perfect for the children to retell in their own way. They could create a comic strip, make up actions to go with their own version of the story or act in their own play. An optional comic strip template is provided for you to use with your group if required. Whatever method you decide to use with the children, you can work through the following steps to establish the story’s key points.

Watch 3:09 to end.

On a flip chart or screen, jot down the main points of the story for the children to refer to.

Key events

1. Paul and Silas were two friends.
2. They wanted to serve God.
3. They told people God's story.
4. Some people didn't want to hear it.
5. Those people threw Paul and Silas in jail.
6. Paul and Silas weren't scared.
7. They had a dance party to worship God.
8. God opened the jail doors with an earthquake.
9. Paul and Silas stayed to tell the jail guard about God.
10. They went free and kept on serving God.



When the children have had sufficient time to recreate their version of the story, they can share it with the rest of the group.

Pray it

Say:

Paul and Silas found themselves in an extremely difficult situation. They had done everything God had asked them to do, yet they were attacked and thrown in jail. It would have been easy for them to think that God had given up on them.

Display the *Patience* sign.

Ask:

In what ways did Paul and Silas show that the fruit of God's patience was growing within them?

Say:

Paul and Silas knew that, no matter the circumstances, they could trust in God. Even when things were difficult, they chose to sing God's praises. Our memory verse for this month reminds us that God is always with us, even when things are challenging.

Give each child a *memory verse wristband*. Introduce the memory verse and read it together.

Memory verse

'The Lord is my strength and shield.

I trust him, and he helps me.

I am very happy.

And I praise him with my song.'

(Psalm 28:7 *ICB*)

Ask:

What situations are you, or someone you know, facing where you need to place your trust in God?

Say:

To bring our session to a close, we're going to sing a song that reminds us that God can be trusted, even when times are hard.

Song

'I trust in him' (Bible adventure worship) by LifeKids (2:30)

Bring the session to a close in prayer, incorporating any concerns raised by the children.

 **Explore it**

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Paul and Silas in prison

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Acts 16:16-4



Aim:
To know we can be close to God in difficult times



Today's fruit:
Patience



Pray

During our session you had the chance to share the challenges you or those you love are facing. Spend time praying for your family, friends, and the other children in the group. You could use our prayer song from this week to help you stay focused.

'I trust in him' (Bible adventure worship)
by LifeKids



Discover

In today's story there was an earthquake which meant that Paul and Silas could escape from the prison. In our world today some countries experience natural earthquakes.

Watch the clip and jot down three fascinating facts about earthquakes. Share what you have discovered with the people at home.

***What is an earthquake?* The Dr Binocs Show (education videos for kids)** by Peekaboo Kidz



Song for the week

'That's who I praise' by Brandon Lake
(motions and lyrics) by Kid Kardia



Memory verse

**'The Lord is my strength and shield.
I trust him, and he helps me.
I am very happy.
And I praise him with my song.'**
(Psalm 28:7 ICB)

Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children
& Youth

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Bible verses:
Acts 16:16-4



Aim:
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Today's fruit:
Patience



Memory verse

**'The Lord is my strength and shield.
I trust him, and he helps me.
I am very happy.
And I praise him with my song.'**

(Psalm 28:7 *ICB*)



Start it

Paul and Silas loved to tell people about Jesus, but not everyone wanted to hear what they had to say. In today's story they were treated badly and thrown into prison. But God was with them every step of the way.



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Acts 16:16-20 or watch the following clip.

Slapstick Theatre (Paul and Silas) by Saddleback Kids (1:34)

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- Why did Paul and Silas get into trouble?
- What happened to Paul and Silas?
- What did Paul and Silas do when they were in prison?
- What song of praise would you choose to

sing if you were having a horrible day?

- What amazing thing happened to set Paul and Silas free?



Sing It

'If I were a butterfly' (lyrics and music)
'The butterfly song' by Brian Howard,
uploaded by Unreached Corners (3:09)

'Wonderful Lord' (official video) by Doug Horley (3:13)



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Sing your favourite praise song as loud as you can, just like Paul and Silas did.
- Imagine you are in the prison with Paul and Silas as the earthquake brings the walls down. Shake around as if the ground is moving.
- Draw two pictures of the jailor's face: one where he thought the prisoners were missing and one where he discovered that everyone was safe. How are they different?
- Paul and Silas patiently waited for God to answer their prayers. Name one way you could try to be patient this week.